

Continues Pushing for Fair Trade Reforms to Protect American Jobs

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), a staunch opponent of free trade laws that lack workers' rights and environmental protection provisions, today announced that 380 workers who lost their jobs at the Emerson Power Transmission facility in Ithaca, New York will be eligible to apply for trade adjustment assistance (TAA). Late last month, Hinchey called on the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to expedite the TAA application and make the benefits of the program available to Emerson workers as soon as possible. The DOL promptly responded, certifying the eligibility of the workers to apply for the adjustment assistance.

"The Emerson workers who lost their jobs because of unfair trade deals, that should never have been passed in the first place, are now entitled to Trade Adjustment Assistance," said Hinchey. "I worked directly with the Department of Labor to ensure that help is available as soon as possible to Emerson's workers and employees of Challenge Industries, Manpower, Morris Protective Services and Rogan's Corners who have been adversely affected by the exportation of jobs. While I continue working to correct our trade policy so that it includes a comprehensive set of labor and environmental standards that will prevent the exportation of more jobs, these workers will get some of the assistance they deserve and need to get back on their feet."

The Emerson Power Transmission facility in Ithaca, New York has been devastated by the movement of jobs to low-wage labor markets and the impact of cheaper products from Pacific Rim manufacturers. Workers who lost their jobs with Emerson had been trying to obtain TAA since the Ithaca plant's closure announcement in August 2009.

Hinchey's April 23, 2010 letter to the U.S. Department of Labor was instrumental in securing the TAA benefits. A recent certification from an official with the Division of Trade Adjustment Assistance at the Department of Labor declares all workers of Emerson Power Transmission, including on-site leased workers, are eligible to apply for the adjustment assistance under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade act of 1974.

TAA was created to provide benefits and support to workers who become unemployed due to the impact of unfair trade deals. The program provides cash allowances, up to three years of full-time or part-time training, an 80 percent tax credit for the cost of qualified health insurance,

wage subsidies for workers over 50 who find new employment at a reduced salary, and job search and relocation allowances.

Hinchey is a co-sponsor of the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development & Employment Act, which would require a comprehensive review of existing trade agreements, and ensure environmental, labor and human rights standards are addressed in future agreements. He opposed the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement, the Central American Free Trade Agreement and numerous other unfair trade deals, which lacked safeguards to protect workers and the environment.

"International trade is something that has been corrupted and twisted in a way that benefits large corporations at the expense of American workers," Hinchey said. "We need to correct this problem by revisiting and modifying our existing trade agreements so that they protect workers' rights at home and abroad."

Hinchey voted to pass the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through which the TAA is funded. The recovery measure has already saved or created more than 2.2 million jobs – rebuilding our infrastructure and economy for global competitiveness. Through the Recovery Act, 95 percent of working Americans continue to see the benefit of one of the largest tax cuts in history in every paycheck.